

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. 10/611,430 Confirmation No. 1434
Applicant Joseph T. Ambrefe, Jr.
Filed 2 July 2003
TC/Art 2634
Examiner Unassigned

Docket No. 47955-00002
Customer No. 23767

PATENT OFFICE FEE TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following fees are enclosed in connection with the filing of the attached papers:

Petition Filing Fee.....\$130.00

It is not believed that any further fees are due in connection with the filing of the attached papers. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment of fees to the undersigned's deposit account no. 50-1067.

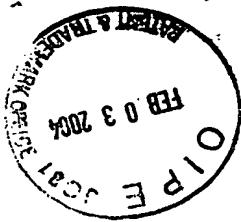
Respectfully submitted,

3 February 2004

Don J. Peltz
Reg. No. 33,754

LAWRENCE SMC
REG NO 38330
For

Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds LLP
1735 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone : (202) 628-1700
Facsimile : (202) 331-1024



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**PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL
UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.102 AND M.P.E.P. § 708.02 (XI)**

Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.102, Applicant hereby petitions the United States Patent and Trademark Office to make the referenced application special and thus accelerate examination on the basis that the invention relates to countering terrorism as delineated under M.P.E.P. § 708.02 (XI).

Pursuant to M.P.E.P. § 708.02 (XI), the present invention contributes to the countering of terrorism. *See, e.g.*, Claims 1-25. Specifically, independent claims 1, 6, 19 and 21 contribute to countering terrorism through teaching an apparatus, system and method for increasing the efficiency and efficacy of security checkpoints through the use of specially-designed trays and tray carts. The invention directly contributes to countering terrorism by providing a mechanism or means to (1) immediately associate individuals with their personal items or vice versa during the screening process, (2) convey safety messages during the screening process, (3) generate revenue to maintain state-of-the art screening areas, (4) facilitate the visual inspection of personal items and (5) allow security personnel to more fully focus on the process of security screening rather than on peripheral diversions associated with the process. The invention achieves these benefits by providing for the more efficient use, storage and movement of trays used to screen personal items. *See, e.g.*, application at ¶¶ 41, 46 and 67.

Security areas typically are encountered in places such as airport security terminals, courthouse entrances and other places where a person and their belongings are searched. *Id.* at ¶ 3. Presently, there are a number of disadvantages associated with screening processes used in such areas. One disadvantage is that the trays used for the collection of personal items do not provide a mechanism to associate an individual going through the screening process with his or her personal items or vice versa. In addition, the trays do not use the available space they provide to communicate with those being screened, and are not appropriately sized to facilitate the visual inspection of personal items. *Id.* at ¶¶ 5 and 7. Another disadvantage with presently-used screening processes is the lack of an efficient process to dispense and recollect personal item trays. *Id.* at ¶¶ 5 and 6. With no efficient or ordered process to accomplish this peripheral, yet essential task, the attention of security personnel often is diverted away from the vital process of screening. The present invention eliminates the above disadvantages and increases safety beyond screened areas by (1) using specially-designed trays and (2) implementing an effective system to collect and make available previously-used trays. *Id.* at ¶¶ 12, 41, 42 and 45.

1. Specially-Designed Trays.

The specially-designed trays of the application increase safety beyond security checkpoint areas by providing a means to associate personal items being screened with individual visitors to the screening area or vice versa. Specifically, identification numbers placed on the trays serve to identify each tray with a specific person going through the screening process. *Id.* at ¶ 62. If contraband items or weapons are found within a personal item tray, the owner of such items immediately is identified. *Id.* at ¶ 52. Conversely, if an individual person is identified as a terror threat, their personal items may be immediately identified and searched. This extremely efficient association system will increase the speed with which dangerous people or items are identified. Thus, this feature of the specially-designed trays will increase safety beyond checkpoint areas.

In addition to providing the efficient association system described above, the trays disclosed in the application also provide space for important communications to those visiting the screened area. This communication opportunity increases safety in two ways. First, it provides a platform to convey important safety messages to visitors of the screening area.

Second, to the extent private entities buy advertising space on these trays, an additional source of revenue to maintain state-of-the-art screening areas is generated. *Id.* at ¶¶ 7 and 46. For these reasons, the specially-designed trays of the application increase safety in areas beyond security checkpoints and directly contribute to countering terrorism efforts in these areas.

The trays described in the application also are specially-sized both to facilitate the visual inspection of personal items and to provide for the efficient and safe movement of personal items. Specifically, a larger-sized tray is used to hold larger items, such as cameras, laptop computers and purses while a second smaller-sized tray holds smaller items such as keys, wallets, cell phones and PDAs. *Id.* at ¶ 44. Separation of such items by size can lead to more effective visual screening of these items by security checkpoint personnel. An embodiment of the trays including transparent walls also further facilitates the visual inspection of personal items. *Id.* at ¶ 49.

2. Efficient System To Collect And Make Available Previously-Used Trays.

In addition to increasing the effectiveness of screening through specially-designed trays, the present invention also increases the efficacy of check point screening by providing an efficient system to collect and make available previously-used trays. *Id.* at ¶ 45. Specifically, the invention includes both uniform tray sizing so that trays may be easily stacked while remaining accessible and specially-designed tray racks (preferably on wheels) to store empty trays in an organized manner. *Id.* at ¶¶ 42 and 67. For example, a stacked tray is removed from a first rack by a person entering the screening area. Once the person passes through the checkpoint and recollects his personal items, the empty tray may be inserted into a second rack that is identical to the first. Empty trays are stacked in the second rack and conveniently stored for later use. After the second rack is filled with empty trays, it can be wheeled to the position of the first rack thus providing a new supply of personal item trays. *Id.* at ¶¶ 45, 64 and 65. Further, a third identical cart/rack can be used for overflow storage of trays as needed. This overflow cart further increases the efficiency of the present invention. *Id.* at ¶ 66. Importantly, the racks conveniently are able to hold and store both large and small-sized trays. *Id.* at ¶ 67. This efficient process and system for moving and storing personal item trays allows security personnel to remain focused on the process of screening rather than on storing, transporting and making available personal item trays. *Id.* at ¶ 46. To

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the extent security personnel are better able to focus on the process of security screening, terrorism efforts in these areas will be directly countered.

Accordingly, and for all reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully requests that this Petition To Make Special be granted and that the pending claims be examined and allowed as quickly as possible.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.102 (d), Applicant encloses a check for \$130.00 as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 (h). In the event any additional fees are due in connection with this paper, please charge the undersigned's Deposit Account, No. 50-1067.

Respectfully submitted,

3 February 2004


Don J. Pelto
Reg. No. 33,754

LAWRENCE S. S.
BER 40
58330
FUR

Preston Gates Ellis Rouvelas & Meeds, LLP
1735 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 628-1700
Facsimile: (202) 331-1024